

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE UNITED STATES
FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF ALABAMA
SOUTHERN DIVISION

JAMES LONG, #169420,)
)
Plaintiff,)
)
v.) CIVIL ACTION NO. 1:07-CV-581-MHT
) [WO]
)
COMMANDER REED, et al.,)
)
Defendants.)

RECOMMENDATION OF THE MAGISTRATE JUDGE

In this 42 U.S.C. § 1983 action, James Long ["Long"], a state inmate, challenges the constitutionality of actions taken against him during his incarceration at the Houston County Jail. Specifically, Long complains that the defendants subjected him to a body cavity search on April 17, 2007. He names Keith Reed, Carl Kirksey, William Moore, Robert Pettie, Nicky Seaverson and Francis Beanoard, correctional personnel employed at the Houston County Jail, as defendants in this cause of action.¹ Long seeks declaratory relief and monetary damages for the alleged violations of his constitutional rights.

The defendants filed a special report and supporting evidentiary materials addressing Long's claims for relief. Pursuant to the orders entered in this case, the court deems it appropriate to treat this report as a motion for summary judgment. *Order of September 17, 2007 - Court Doc. No. 18.* Hence, this case is now pending on the defendants' motion for

¹The defendants advise that the correct surnames of defendants Seaverson and Beanoard are Severson and Bernhard.

summary judgment. Upon consideration of this motion and the evidentiary materials filed in support thereof, the court concludes that the defendants' motion for summary judgment is due to be granted.

I. STANDARD OF REVIEW

To survive the defendants' properly supported motion for summary judgment, Long must "go beyond the pleadings and ... designate 'specific facts showing that there is a genuine issue for trial.'" *Celotex Corp. v. Catrett*, 477 U.S. 317, 324 (1986); *Anderson v. Liberty Lobby, Inc.*, 477 U.S. 242, 249 (1986) (nonmoving party is required to produce "sufficient [favorable] evidence" indicating he is entitled to relief sought). "If the evidence [on which the nonmoving party relies] is merely colorable ... or is not significantly probative ... summary judgment may be granted." *Anderson v. Liberty Lobby*, 477 U.S. at 249-250. "A mere 'scintilla' of evidence supporting the opposing party's position will not suffice; there must be enough of a showing that the [trier of fact] could reasonably find for that party. *Anderson v. Liberty Lobby*, 477 U.S. 242, 106 S.Ct. 2505, 2512, 91 L.Ed.2d 202 (1986)." *Walker v. Darby*, 911 F.2d 1573, 1576-1577 (11th Cir. 1990). A plaintiff's conclusory allegations similarly do not provide sufficient evidence to oppose a motion for summary judgment. *Harris v. Ostrout*, 65 F.3d 912, 916 (11th Cir. 1995); *Fullman v. Graddick*, 739 F.2d 553, 556-557 (11th Cir. 1984). Thus, when a plaintiff fails to make a showing sufficient to establish the existence of an element essential to his case and on which the plaintiff bears the burden of proof, summary judgment is due to be granted in

favor of the moving party. *Celotex*, 477 U.S. at 322 ("[F]ailure of proof concerning an essential element of the nonmoving party's case necessarily renders all other facts immaterial."); *Barnes v. Southwest Forest Industries, Inc.*, 814 F.2d 607, 609 (11th Cir. 1987) (if on any part of the *prima facie* case the plaintiff presents insufficient evidence to require submission of the case to the trier of fact, granting of summary judgment is appropriate).

To demonstrate a genuine issue of material fact, the party opposing summary judgment "must do more than simply show that there is some metaphysical doubt as to the material facts.... Where the record taken as a whole could not lead a rational trier of fact to find for the nonmoving party, there is no 'genuine issue for trial.'" *Matsushita Elec. Indus. Co. v. Zenith Radio Corp.*, 475 U.S. 574, 587 (1986). Consequently, where the evidence before the court which is admissible on its face or which can be reduced to admissible form indicates that there is no genuine issue of material fact and that the party moving for summary judgment is entitled to it as a matter of law, summary judgment is proper. *Celotex*, 477 U.S. at 323-324 (summary judgment is appropriate where pleadings, evidentiary materials and affidavits before the court show there is no genuine issue as to a requisite material fact); *Waddell v. Valley Forge Dental Associates, Inc.*, 276 F.3d 1275, 1279 (11th Cir. 2001) (to establish a genuine issue of material fact, the nonmoving party must produce evidence such that a reasonable trier of fact could return a verdict in his favor).

Although factual inferences must be viewed in a light most favorable to the nonmoving party, and *pro se* complaints are entitled to liberal interpretation by the courts, a *pro se* litigant does not escape the burden of establishing a genuine issue of material fact. *Brown v. Crawford*, 906 F.2d 667, 670 (11th Cir. 1990). In this case, Long has failed to meet the requisite burden so as to preclude entry of summary judgment in favor of the defendants. *Matsushita, supra*.

II. DISCUSSION

Long challenges the constitutionality of actions taken against him during his confinement in the Houston County Jail. In response to the claims presented in the complaint, the defendants argue that this case is due to be dismissed because Long failed to properly exhaust his administrative remedies as directed by the Prison Litigation Reform Act ("PLRA"), 42 U.S.C. § 1997e(a).

The PLRA requires exhaustion of available administrative remedies before a prisoner can seek relief in federal court on a 42 U.S.C. § 1983 complaint. Specifically, 42 U.S.C. § 1997e(a) directs that "[n]o action shall be brought with respect to prison conditions under section 1983 of this title, or any other Federal law, by a prisoner confined in any jail, prison, or other correctional facility until such administrative remedies as are available are exhausted." "Congress has provided in § 1997(e)(a) that an inmate must exhaust irrespective of the forms of relief sought and offered through administrative remedies." *Booth v. Churner*, 532 U.S. 731, 741 n.6 (2001). "[T]he PLRA's exhaustion requirement applies to all inmate suits about prison life, whether they involve general

circumstances or particular episodes, and whether they allege excessive force or some other wrong." *Porter v. Nussle*, 534 U.S. 516, 532 (2002). Exhaustion of all available administrative remedies is a precondition to litigation and a federal court cannot waive the exhaustion requirement. *Booth*, 532 U.S. at 741; *Alexander v. Hawk*, 159 F.3d 1321, 1325 (11th Cir. 1998); *Woodford v. Ngo*, ____ U.S. ___, 126 S.Ct. 2378 (2006). Moreover, "the PLRA exhaustion requirement requires **proper exhaustion**." *Ngo*, 126 S.Ct. at 2387 (emphasis added).

The Supreme Court in *Ngo* determined "[proper exhaustion] means ... that a prisoner must complete the administrative review process in accordance with the applicable procedural rules, including deadlines, as a precondition to bringing suit in federal court." 126 S.Ct. at 2384. The Court further explained "[p]roper exhaustion demands compliance with an agency's deadlines and other critical procedural rules [prior to seeking relief from a federal court] because no adjudicative system can function effectively without imposing some orderly structure on the courts of its proceedings.... Construing § 1997e(a) to require proper exhaustion ... fits with the general scheme of the PLRA, whereas [a contrary] interpretation [allowing an inmate to bring suit in federal court once administrative remedies are no longer available] would turn that provision into a largely useless appendage." *Id.* at 2386. This interpretation of the PLRA's exhaustion requirement "carries a sanction" for noncompliance and avoids "mak[ing] the PLRA exhaustion scheme wholly ineffective." *Id.* at 2388. Consequently, a prisoner cannot "proceed ... to federal court" after bypassing available administrative remedies, either by failing to properly exhaust

administrative remedies or waiting until such remedies are no longer available, as allowing federal review under these circumstances would impose "no significant sanction" on the prisoner and "the PLRA did not create such a toothless scheme." *Id.*

The record before the court establishes that during Long's confinement in the Houston County Jail the jail provided a grievance procedure for inmate complaints. The undisputed evidentiary materials submitted by the defendants demonstrate Long did not file a grievance with respect to the actions about which he complains. The court therefore concludes the claims for relief presented in this cause of action are subject to dismissal as Long did not properly exhaust an administrative remedy previously available to him which is a precondition to proceeding in this court on his claims. *Ngo*, 126 S.Ct. at 2384-2388.

III. CONCLUSION

Accordingly, it is the RECOMMENDATION of the Magistrate Judge that:

1. The defendants' motion for summary judgment be GRANTED to the extent that the defendants seek dismissal of this case due to the plaintiff's failure to exhaust an administrative remedy.
2. This case be DISMISSED with prejudice in accordance with the provisions of 42 U.S.C. § 1997e(a). *Woodford v. Ngo*, ____ U.S. ___, 126 S.Ct. 2378 (2006).
3. No costs be taxed herein.

It is further

ORDERED that on or before December 12, 2007 the parties may file objections to the Recommendation. Any objections filed must specifically identify the findings in the

Magistrate Judge's Recommendation to which the party is objecting. Frivolous, conclusive or general objections will not be considered by the District Court. The parties are advised that this Recommendation is not a final order of the court and, therefore, it is not appealable.

Failure to file written objections to the proposed findings and advisements in the Magistrate Judge's Recommendation shall bar the party from a de novo determination by the District Court of issues covered in the Recommendation and shall bar the party from attacking on appeal factual findings in the Recommendation accepted or adopted by the District Court except upon grounds of plain error or manifest injustice. *Nettles v. Wainwright*, 677 F.2d 404 (5th Cir. 1982). *See Stein v. Reynolds Securities, Inc.*, 667 F.2d 33 (11th Cir. 1982). *See also Bonner v. City of Prichard*, 661 F.2d 1206 (11th Cir. 1981, *en banc*), adopting as binding precedent all of the decisions of the former Fifth Circuit handed down prior to the close of business on September 30, 1981.

Done this 30th day of November, 2007.

/s/Terry F. Moorer
TERRY F. MOORER
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE